

## **Appendix A:**

### **Holywell Academy report on the consultation and responses on the proposed expansion of the School**

This consultation followed on from the agreement of Central Bedfordshire Council Executive on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017 to support the school in consulting to expand its intake from 5 form entry to 6 form of entry.

The Consultation period ran from 24<sup>th</sup> April to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

The consultation was highlighted in the Bedford Times and Citizen and also Cranfield Express before the working period. The document was posted on the school website ahead of the working period.

Copies of the Consultation document were provided for every child in Holywell School and also every child in years 3 and 4 of the two partner Lower Schools – Cranfield Academy and Wootton Lower. Children in Foundation Stage, years 1 and 2 received a letter advising parents of the consultation and also of the availability of the document on the school website or from the school office.

The Headteacher informed the Chief Education Officers of Bedford and Milton Keynes of the consultation.

The Headteacher attended Cranfield Parish Council on 19<sup>th</sup> April to set out the consultation, the broad plans and to take questions from the Council and also from members of the public.

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors met with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of Wootton Upper School and Marston Vale on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 and set out the consultation and the associated current plans to implement this expansion. Also in attendance were the Chief Executives of the partner MATs for both of those schools/academies.

As advertised in the consultation document, the school was open for a drop-in public meeting evening on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017. One member of the public attended and no families.

On 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017 there was a well-attended meeting with staff – 31 present. The broad plan was set out by the Headteacher and staff were able to ask questions from a wide variety of aspects of the expansion plan.

## **Responses to the Consultation Document.**

There were 180 responses to the consultation.

There was some overlap between the categories of respondent, but in short the responses were

124 Holywell School parent responses

28 from parents of pupils at Cranfield Academy or Wootton Lower School

22 from employees of Holywell School

2 from governors of Holywell School (though note that governors all voted unanimously in support of this exercise to allow for the consultation to go ahead).

4 responses from Local Residents.

81% of respondents were female, 19% male.

78% of respondents declared as WBRI. In 2016 the school demographic showed 76% WBRI.

90% of respondents overall supported the proposal to expand Holywell by one form.

86.3% of Holywell parents responding were in favour

96.4% of Cranfield Academy/Wootton Lower school parents were in favour.

100% of governors and also of local residents who responded were in favour.

32 of the 162 respondents who support the expansion also wrote a comment (see below).

9 of the 18 respondents who do not support the expansion also wrote a comment (see below).

The comments have been organised into broadly similar areas of interest/focus

### **IN SUPPORT OF EXPANSION**

- Local children need a place at a local school
- I believe the expansion will be a good idea for surrounding areas to provide enough space for the pupils of the area
- I think it is a great idea that supports the schooling of our expanding communities
- Fab! This is what the village needs with all the new houses and extra children. Totally support this.
- This is reassuring information if successful, having a child who may struggle with finding a middle school place come 2019 from Wootton.
- I am not happy about how big the schools are becoming in Wootton and surrounding areas but realise it is a necessity with all the new houses going up in the area
- I wish there was not so much building going on in these areas but there is no way if stopping it so the schools have to adjust accordingly

- The expansion is vital with the very large numbers of houses being built in both Cranfield and Wootton. However further expansion will clearly be needed in a few years time. (Correct to observe, as per several respondent comments, that the expansion of local villages continues and in the foreseeable future further thought will be required on how to provide for those larger numbers coming through the system.)
- There needs to be further consideration of catchment areas - possibly simplify to one financial provider. (Changing catchment areas is not under consideration or discussion – the expansion is tightly focused on providing for Holywell's catchment area. Catchment area would be a very major discussion if it ever came forward.)
- I am happy for the school to expand for catchment children, but not to take out of catchment. (Children with siblings currently attending the school will continue to have a ranking within the Admissions Policy. In the medium term out of catchment children numbers will decline as the number of in-catchment applicants for year 5 admission rise.)
- Provision of places post 13 years will also need to be addressed if current 3 tier system is to be maintained (CBC) or eliminated (Borough)
- (The two previous comments raise significant medium term issues for the two Local Authorities. Holywell is strongly continuing its Middle School direction. Wootton Upper is equally strongly committed to working with us in this form of school organization, as it is with Marston Vale Middle.)
- Our eldest child is benefitting from the excellent opportunities at Holywell and we would like to ensure our younger child has the same opportunities (parent@Wootton Lower School)
- My daughter has been looking forward to attending Holywell. She will be disappointed if she cannot. She has had a great start at Wootton Lower and we want to continue her education at this great school
- I don't think there is any alternative choice but to expand – where are these children supposed to attend school if there is no expansion? Not really in favour.
- As long as the education and welfare of my child isn't disrupted and the parents are kept informed during each process, I am happy to support the expansion of Holywell to accommodate the ever expanding village.
- With the building developments in Wootton and Cranfield I support to accommodate the extra children. I hope this will be well funded by the Council. (This will be fully funded by the Council – cost of new buildings and added expenses as children enter school.)
- I am confident that the school can cope with the expansion and it is vital for the community to have their children in their local school
- If funding is provided for suitable teaching and running of the school. (Because the expansion will roll out a little each year for 4 years, the school can plan ahead for recruiting additional teachers.)
- I am hopeful that there will be funding for the pastoral needs of pupils. (Funding is linked to numbers of pupils. As these increase the school can look at how it uses its budget in all areas, including this one.)

- Need to also assess the need of an even stronger governing body to oversee the development and to budget the additional finance requirement to maintain the expanded premise whilst still maintaining the high teaching standards and student performance.
- The expansion needs to take into account the ability of all teachers to handle. All other facilities need to be upgraded as well. (As with previous comment, the gradual roll-out will allow the school time to gradually build and re-shape the organization. With regard to developing facilities, the building programme has been defined by careful curriculum analysis to ensure that there are both sufficient facilities and of a standard that at least matches current provision. The Governing Body is very active and knowledgeable of the school and issues in our area. They have ensured that Holywell's finances have been consistently very carefully and effectively managed.)
- Staff recruitment; will there be money for enough teachers? When will the recruitment of specialists start taking place? (Funding is overwhelmingly set per pupil in the school. The number of teachers required is similarly a reflection of the number of pupils – so as pupil numbers expand, income increases and teachers are recruited. With the gradual roll-out year by year over four years the school can recruit in a timely way ahead of each September increase in pupil numbers.)
- Will the character of the school be protected?
- Just hope that it does not have a negative impact on the children. (The building programme should not have a negative impact – the working areas are on the edges of current building areas so normal movement and access will remain. There are some notable positives with the new accommodation – Sports Hall especially, but also improved indoor eating, additional spaces for the practical subjects. It is true the school will need to be alert to sustain its special ethos and broad experience of school life for its pupils in a larger format.)
- So long as class sizes are under 30 and indoor lunch seating areas increased. (Class sizes will not be affected by the expansion in the overall size of the school. When the new Sports Hall is built the current gym will become an indoor eating area for around 180 pupils.)
- Check traffic management.
- Traffic is already a problem - this needs careful consideration
- Thought needs to be given to try to get more children walking, cycling or on the bus
- Parents dropping off their children at either end of the day causes major disruption to the whole village.  
(As the school fills to catchment capacity – the purpose of this expansion – it will become ever more populated either by Cranfield residents (who we will continue to encourage to walk to school) or Wootton residents (who come to school in a school bus)).
- Will Wootton Upper School be able to cope with the increased admissions this expansion creates?

- What are Wootton Upper School doing to accommodate the increase in pupils? (Wootton Upper School already has capacity for 1300+ students. When Holywell is full with the new numbers (180) and Marston Vale (150) this would have 330 students potentially looking to move to Wootton Upper – creating a school of 1290 Holywell and Marston Vale students.)
- Would like to know where the expansion will take place - we are residents in the close. (Current plans will have three notable areas of building. (i) At the front of the school the office area will be extended into a line with the Library. (ii) At the very back of the school site, in the dip, a new Sports Hall. (iii) In the middle of the site – on ground behind the gym – a new classroom block. All of these ideas are subject to planning scrutiny and far more detailed work over the summer.)
- How disruptive will the development be? (The school organized its last major works in 2014/2015 with minimal disruption to local residents. Deliveries take place outside of major traffic moments and come right into the site/playing fields. As per note from parent asking about their child's schooling not being disrupted, this minimizing of impact of the programme is a key part of planning for the school.)
- The new Sports Hall planned is needed and I hope it can be used by the wider community outside of school hours as the MUGA used to be.
- What happens if the expansion does not receive sufficient support? (In September 2018, if the expansion does not take place, a number of applicants who would normally anticipate moving to Holywell would be turned down. This will ensure that our catchment children have a place in their catchment Middle School.)
- I wonder how this expansion will affect our in-year admission flexibility for pupils coming from Cranfield University, who are not usually here for the beginning of the school year (usual arrival is October or November) (As the school moves to being full in every year group then both Cranfield University and other catchment area mid-year arrivals are likely to be put on a waiting list. There is a reasonable level of pupil/family moves during the year – moving elsewhere in the country/ returning abroad so the waiting list is constantly changing

## AGAINST THE EXPANSION

- Concerned about whether the expansion of the school will have an impact on the schooling and standards within the school that could affect my children - ie larger classes. (The school must always focus on the quality of education it provides and look to continuously improve. There is research that says Middle Schools of around 750 pupils are the best size. We would need to stay focused on standards and look to make the gains for our children from that slightly larger size.)
- I think the school is big enough.
- Will lose the village school feel
- If the school is expanded then there won't be room. My daughter went to Holywell and space was always a problem. (We have worked on getting rid of the cramped spaces in school that were historically very unpleasant – eg the main corridor had 400 – 500 pupils moving up and down between lessons. Now only two classes go into that corridor. The plans include 50% increase in playground space. Other elements of planning pick up on this concern over not creating a cramped experience for Holywell pupils.)
- Increasing the school population will dilute the current care and attention the children receive.
- To take in more children it would take away the fantastic environment, learning ethos of the school putting more pressure on staff and children already there
- (Holywell will grow by just 30 pupils per year – the expansion rolls out over four years. The school is immensely proud of the care and attention and quality environment it provides for pupils and staff. This gradual roll-out will allow for careful review and development of practice to sustain all that is good about Holywell.)
- Given the current predicament schools are facing (increase in pupils but no real funding from government) I believe that the expansion will impact on the school's capability to provide current levels of teaching quality. (It is true that all schools are facing financial challenges over the coming years with added structural costs being put on us and the funding from government not matching the rates of these increased costs. However the funding for these additional pupils will be fully in line with that received for other pupils and the expectation is that there will be some small savings to be made from being a larger school.)
- Does not matter what we think. The Council will do what they want regardless. the fact that they have given planning to so much housing without the infrastructure to support it ie Health Centre all these consultations are a waste of time. We have no respect for the Council and the decisions they make! (We ought to note that Central Bedfordshire Council and its Officers have been very active and supportive. They are funding at risk a great deal of planning and preliminary work currently to help ensure that if this goes ahead the additional classrooms and facilities will be created in a timely manner.)

- I worry about the disruption to the school and pupils during the construction work and I think that the area struggles to accommodate the current level of traffic and parking partly due to the selfish actions of a small number of parents and increasing the number of pupils will lead to greater problems.

(The construction plans are set to have no impact on the normal school operation. There will be a special path across the builders' road to get to the playing fields. Otherwise school runs as normal. With regard to traffic issues, the direction of travel for Holywell is to be increasingly populated by children resident in Cranfield (who can walk to school) and Wootton (who have buses to come to school). This ought to reduce the numbers of families bringing children to school in a car.)

- I would first want to see the plan for coping with additional pupils/resource requirements. (We would be happy to share the plans once they have been worked up and ready to go to planners after agreement with Central Bedfordshire. This will be close to the end of term.)